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the book of

LEVITICUS

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Why Study Leviticus?

The book of Leviticus is often overlooked by Christians today simply because the book is complex and frankly not as easy to read as other parts. However, if you are willing to dive in and spend some time studying the book of Leviticus you might find that it has some very timely and powerful instructions for the Christian believer.

In the book of Leviticus, we see God calling out to Moses and His people, the Israelites. He calls out to them to give instructions on how to live in a close relationship with Him. The book of Leviticus is full of God's words for how the people of God should live. There isn't an aspect of life that God does not instruct on. God gives the Israelites instructions on how to conduct themselves ritually, socially, sexually, morally, and politically. God desires His people to reflect His image and goodness to the surrounding nations as they live in a distinct and ordered way—a way that focuses on being holy because the God they serve is holy.

Understanding The Story Of God And Why That Matters When Reading Leviticus

In the opening pages of the Bible, we see that our God, the creator of the world, desires to be with His creation. The picture we see in Genesis 1-2 is that God created an oasis-like garden that is flourishing with life and God's blessings. It is in this temple-like Eden that God would walk with Adam and Eve. Even after they sinned and rebelled against God's instructions, we see in the rest of the Bible that God makes a way for His people to be restored to a right relationship with him.

God chose one family to live and walk in a relationship with Him. In Genesis 12, God promised Abraham that from his family line, God would bless the world. However, by the beginning of the book of Exodus, Abraham's family had become slaves to the Egyptians.

The book of Exodus shows that God's desire for His people is not to be enslaved to Pharaoh but to be a treasured possession, a kingdom of Priests (Ex 19:6) living in the land God promised to Abraham.

Once freed from slavery, God starts leading the Israelites to the promised land but following God is not just about the destination reached. Instead, it is learning to walk with God along the journey to the promised land. For the Israelites, their sin was jeopardizing that journey with God. Even after witnessing God's power in Exodus 1-24, the people still rebel and worship a golden calf instead of worshipping the God who freed them.

Because of that, God tells Moses that His Presence will not go with the Israelites on the journey to the promised land (Ex 33:3). Moses knowing the futility of going to the promised land without God's Presence, intercedes on behalf of the people. Listening to Moses' intercession, God gives more instructions to the Israelites on how to deal with their sin properly, allowing God to live in their midst. The book of Leviticus is that set of teachings that establish how God's Holy Presence can live in the middle of the Israelite camp without destroying them because of their sinfulness.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE



Michael DeFazio (New Testament and Hermeneutics professor at Ozark Christian College) walks through the book of Leviticus. Michael will break down different chapters of this book to help you see the whole picture of God's holiness through an ancient Israelite lens, and what we can learn from this book in our 21st-century world.

Found on RightNow Media. Email levi@christchurch.com for access.

Week 1 Scripture

Leviticus 1-7

Study

Hebrews 1:1-4; Hebrews 9-10; Romans 3:25;
Romans 8:3; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 5:2; 1
Corinthians 15:20-23; 2 Corinthians 5:21

Watch

Sessions 1-3 of the RightNow Media Series
Leviticus, by Michael Defazio

Listen

The current episode of the ReThink Podcast by the Christ's Church teaching team

Jesus in Leviticus 1-7

Leviticus 1-7 focuses on the sacrifices God commands the Israelites to give in certain situations. The purpose behind these sacrifices is to make way for the Israelites to live in close proximity to God's Presence in their camp. God gives them a straightforward way to deal with their sinfulness appropriately. This section highlights that drawing near God's Presence can't and shouldn't be taken lightly. Our sinfulness has serious consequences and deserves death if we enter into the Holy Presence of God improperly. Today, our sin is still just as serious, but we have Jesus, who offered himself as an atoning sacrifice on our behalf. Because of Jesus, our sin has been dealt with in a way that allows us to come close to God's Holy Presence. God's Spirit now dwells in and with the lives of those who believe in Him and have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus.

Sermon Notes

Questions

- *How does this section of scripture reveal the nature and character of God?*
- *How does this section of scripture reveal what God desires from those who follow him, both as a community and individually?*
- *How does this text foreshadow the person of Jesus?*
- *How does this text illuminate what Jesus accomplished through his life and death?*
- *How do these passages shape how you live in a right relationship with God?*

Week 2 Scripture

Leviticus 8-10

Study

Hebrews 4-5; Hebrews 7-8; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 Peter 2:4-9;

Watch

Session 4 of the RightNow Media Series
Leviticus, by Michael Defazio

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Jesus in Leviticus 8-10

From the beginning of the Bible, God has desired to dwell with His creation. He created humanity to reflect His goodness and blessing and to partner with Him to extend His goodness on Earth. However, humanity continually reflects Satan, the deceiver, more than they reflect God, the creator of the world. But God is patient with humanity and continually works to bring about a people devoted to Him and who reflects His goodness to the world. In Leviticus 8, God sets apart Aaron and his family to be an intermediary between God and the Israelites. The priests in the Tabernacle are to lead the people in proper devotion and worship towards God. The result in chapter 9 is that God can properly dwell with His people in the Tabernacle. For Christians today, Jesus is the High Priest who is the mediator between God and us. Because of Jesus, God's presence dwells with His church. Our responsibility is to take up the priesthood of all believers leading the world in what it means to worship and reflect God's goodness to the world around us.

Sermon Notes

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Week 3 Scripture

Leviticus 11-15

Study

Hebrews 3; Mark 7; Acts 10; Romans 14-15;
Matthew 5-7

Watch

Session 5 of the RightNow Media Series
Leviticus, by Michael Defazio

Listen

The current episode of the ReThink Podcast by the Christ's Church teaching team

Jesus in Leviticus 11-15

From the opening pages of the Bible, God has been establishing His order and structure in the universe. He created boundaries for the sky, land, water, etc. Once He created Adam and Eve, He made a boundary line for what was acceptable and what wasn't. They chose to cross that boundary line and rebel against His wise rule. Since then, God has been working to create a people that will discipline themselves and live under His will. Because of that, His instructions place boundaries and distinctions on how His people live. Jesus didn't come to abolish the instructions God the Father gave the Israelites but to fulfill them. Jesus taught His disciples what it truly meant to live as God's people. For Christians today, Jesus is our best example of what it looks like to live properly toward God. Yes, there will be distinctions between how we live as Christ-followers and how the world lives. But through Jesus, we will one day be fit to enter God's Holy Presence for all eternity.

Sermon Notes

Questions

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Week 4 Scripture

Leviticus 16

Study

Hebrews 7-10; Romans 8

Watch

Session 6 of the RightNow Media Series

Leviticus, by Michael Defazio

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Sermon Notes

Jesus in Leviticus 16

Sin has serious consequences. It separates humanity from God's Presence and manifests itself through broken relationships. Even in Genesis, Adam and Eve were exiled from the Garden of Eden because of their sin. But God, rich in mercy, didn't want His creation to be separated from His Presence. Therefore, He brought about Jesus who is God Himself in Human form. Jesus is the sinless High Priest that can enter into the heavenly Holy of Holies to make atonement for our sins before a holy and just God. Not only was Jesus sinless, but he offered Himself for humanity's sins. Unlike the Israelites who had to make atonement for their sins yearly, believers in Jesus can have confidence that Jesus' sacrifice was complete and lasting. Because of Jesus, atonement has been made. He was our substitutionary atonement. Today, we don't have to live in fear of God but can live confidently in the person and working of Jesus. However, just like the Israelites, we need to live in a way that honors God's Holiness and the perfect sacrifice of Jesus and not defile it.

Questions

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Week 5 Scripture

Leviticus 17-22

Study

Genesis 1-2; Matthew 5-7; John 14:6

Watch

Sessions 7-11 of the RightNow Media Series

Leviticus, by Michael Defazio

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The current episode of the ReThink Podcast by the Christ's Church teaching team

Jesus in Leviticus 17-22

When we pick up the story of the Bible in the book of Leviticus, we have to understand that this book takes place during a transitional period in the nation of Israel. For the last few hundred years, they had lived as slaves in Egypt under Pharaoh. But God had brought about their deliverance. The people of Israel were freed from their slavery and were now expected to follow the God who saved them. However, the people still had a lot of Egypt in them. Furthermore, God didn't want them to resemble the people in the land they were going to live in. God desired His people to live differently than the people around them because He is a God different from the other gods of the people. He is the only true source of life. God's instructions reflect who He is and how to live wisely, both individually and as a community. When Jesus came, he taught that following God's instructions starts in your heart. The quality of your obedience reveals your heart's devotion towards God. For us today, Jesus is our best example of what it looks like to follow God and live in a right relationship with Him.

Sermon Notes

Questions

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Week 6 Scripture

Leviticus 23-24

Study

Hebrews 4; Exodus 1-12; 1 Corinthians 15;
Romans 14-15

Watch

Sessions 12-13 of the RightNow Media Series
Leviticus, by Michael Defazio

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Jesus in Leviticus 23-24

Now that the Israelites have been freed from the control of Pharaoh, God has to teach the people how to live under His rule and reign. God is not like Pharaoh who sought to enslave and control them. Our God is a God who instructs the Israelites how to live because He is the source and giver of life and blessing. So one of the things God gave His people to remember His goodness and character were weekly, monthly, and yearly rhythms. He wanted His people to celebrate His provision and blessings regularly. It is a reminder that devotion to God should dictate our time and schedules. All time is valuable because it brings opportunities to be in God's presence. Following God is learning to live every day in a relationship with Him. It is the journey through life that matters. Jesus came to save humanity so that humanity could live in a right relationship with our creator God. He is both the way to the Father and the example by which to imitate. Our lives should be modeled after the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Sermon Notes

Questions

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Week 7 Scripture

Leviticus 25-27

Study

Hebrews 4; 1 Peter 1:18-21; Romans 5:6-8;
Galatians 3:10-14; Colossians 1:21-23; Matthew
9:10-12; John 10:10; Mark 8:34-38

Watch

Session 14-16 of the RightNow Media Series
Leviticus, by Michael Defazio

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Jesus in Leviticus 25-27

The type of relationship God called the Israelites to live in was a covenantal relationship. That meant that there were terms and expectations for the relationship. If the relationship were broken, there would be consequences. God entered this covenantal relationship with Israel knowing they would fail and break the relationship. Throughout the Old Testament, God remained faithful to His covenant even when His people didn't. Not only that, He proved that even though His people broke the covenant, He still worked to bring about their good. Jesus was the fulfillment of God's covenant with the people of Israel at Mt. Sinai. Even today, God the Father desires a covenantal relationship with His people. Jesus brought about a new covenant between God and His people, and the stakes are still just as high as they were for the Israelites. The choice is before each and every person. How will you choose to live your life—with God or without Him?

Sermon Notes

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